

# EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

## THE COMPETITIVE CONSUMER ELECTRONICS AVAILABILITY ACT OF 1995

**HON. THOMAS J. BLILEY, JR.**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 21, 1995*

Mr. BLILEY. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce the Competitive Consumer Electronics Availability Act of 1995. This legislation would require the Federal Communications Commission to take affirmative steps to promote competition in set-top boxes and other new technologies that will give consumers access to the national information infrastructure [NII]. Pursuant to this legislation, Commission regulations will assure that converter boxes, interactive communications devices, and other customer premises equipment be available on a competitive basis from manufacturers, retailers, and other vendors who are not affiliated with the operators of telecommunications systems, as is the case in our telephone system today.

It is fashionable to talk about telecommunications reform in terms of opening interfaces between networks or modes of communication. But the one area that ought to be a priority is the consumer interface—how our constituents will actually be connected to these new networks. So far we have two models—the telephone system, where there is a free and competitive market in making and selling network access devices to consumers; and cable television, where the consumer has enjoyed little choice or selection in devices. The Competitive Consumer Electronics Availability Act seeks to ensure that we follow the competitive market model rather than the monopoly model.

I want to be clear that this legislation does not address the internal operating systems or functions of set-top boxes or other devices. I have no intention of inviting or allowing the Commission to regulate the competitive features of computers. What the legislation does address is simply the question of access—allowing these devices, however they operate or are configured, whether they are separate or built into TV's or personal computers, to connect to the NII. A consumer should be able to choose one the same way he or she chooses other products, by going to the store, comparing the quality, features, and price, and buying or renting the best one.

The legislation does not specify any one means or technology by which the Commission must move from local monopoly to national competition. Finding the best way is what the Commission's public notice and comment process is for. With the aid of the world's most competitive telecommunications and computer industries, and a huge market begging for innovation, the Commission can rely on the private sector to identify the best answers.

I also want to stress that this legislation would not stop a system operator from continuing to offer access devices, so long as the

charges for devices are kept separate from the charges for its system services. The Commission would also be empowered to grant waivers, for a limited time, to system operators who are introducing new services.

In introducing and working for the passage of this legislation, I do not mean to disregard the very reasonable concerns of system operators, such as cable TV companies, to deliver to each consumer only the level of service that has been purchased, and to protect the security of their systems. But this is 1995, not 1965. I cannot accept the notion that to accommodate these concerns it is necessary to convey a monopoly on any consumer electronics devices, any more than previous Congresses and Commissions should have accepted the notion that our telephone system would fall apart if consumers would hook up their own devices.

Mr. Speaker, the American public wants and deserves to play a direct role in forming a national information infrastructure. One need only look at the enormous and growing participation and influence of individuals in the Internet to see this. It would be foolish and shortsighted not to allow consumers to select or own the very devices that will open up so much of the NII to them. Consumers deserve to be able to evaluate and select competing products at retail, side by side. Their freedom to do so is a core strength of our economy.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we will have telecommunications reform this year, and I will work to achieve this goal. But we cannot fail to address the most important interface, the consumer interface. I, therefore, ask my colleagues to join me in supporting the Competitive Consumer Electronics Availability Act of 1995.

## HONORING JESSE SAPOLU

**HON. ESTEBAN EDWARD TORRES**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 21, 1995*

Mr. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Jesse Sapolu an accomplished individual who has devoted much of his private life to working with the youth of his community. Jesse also is a National Football League all-pro lineman for the 1994-95 world champion San Francisco 49ers football team.

Following his 1979 graduation from Harrington High School in Hawaii, Jesse attended the University of Hawaii where his football career was marked by many outstanding accomplishments both on and off the field. In 1983, Jesse was drafted by the 49ers. Over the past 13 seasons, Jesse has been a consistent performer and contributor to the San Francisco 49ers dominance of professional football. He has been an integral part of the 49ers four Super Bowl victories and for his excellence on the field of play he has been rewarded by his selection as an all-pro center in 1993 and guard in 1994.

Jesse is an ideal role model for the Pacific Islander community. Much of his off-season time is dedicated to working with youth. He is a junior youth leader at the Dominguez Congregational Church and a valuable ally in the antidrug campaign, as an ardent supporter of the just say no to drugs effort.

Mr. Speaker, it is with pride that I rise to recognize the accomplishments of Jesse Sapolu and I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting him.

## A HISTORIC PARTNERSHIP

**HON. THOMAS J. MANTON**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 21, 1995*

Mr. MANTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share with my colleagues some remarks recently delivered by the Honorable Raymond L. Flynn, the U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican.

In his statement, the Ambassador reflects on the United States moral obligation to help end suffering of our fellow men. I agree that this ethical consideration, to help where we can, and lead by example, should be the cornerstone of our Nation's foreign policy. As my colleagues are no doubt aware, the Holy See has demonstrated great leadership in the fight for freedom from all types of oppression. I commend his speech, "the United States and the Holy See: A Historic Partnership" to my colleagues' attention.

THE UNITED STATES AND THE HOLY SEE: A HISTORIC PARTNERSHIP . . . FROM THE POTOMAC TO THE TIBER

*Delivering humanitarian assistance to the Third World: the Necessity to act*

The United States and the Vatican are developing an important partnership, one based on common interest, cooperation and coordination. This partnership has the capability to become a prominent feature of the post cold-war world where the ability to achieve results in the international arena may be based as much on moral concerns as on military and economic alliances.

Many are not aware of the relationship between the U.S. and the Vatican, so let me review some of the highlights of our productive relationship over the past 11 years of official diplomatic relations. First I would like to discuss a crucial issue for U.S. foreign policy: the moral commitment we have as a nation to help those most in need.

We hear outrageous statements in Congress about the trillions of dollars of foreign aid being tossed down Third World ratholes. There is a major debate in Washington today about whether to cut the foreign aid that goes to feed the hungry and clothe the naked in some of the poorest places in the world. What many Americans do not realize is that we spend less than one half of one percent of the federal budget on foreign aid and even less on the part of foreign aid that goes toward humanitarian assistance. That is not too much. If anything, it's too little.

Foreign aid to help poor and developing countries is not only morally correct but makes sound U.S. policy. A small amount of

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